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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1712
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 4637
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3850
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0526
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 2108
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6006
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2556
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9462
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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PAKISTAN, H1N1 FLU OUTBREAK
(SWINE FLU), SRI LANKA UNREST; NEW DELHI.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press. The Mission reports on English-language media via email through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

PAKISTAN

1. "TALIBAN'S HOLD OVER PAKISTAN," op-ed article by columnist R.R. Palsokar in April 29 centrist Marathi daily SAKAAL: "The conflict in Pakistan has various facets. First, political clashes between Asif Zardari's Pakistan People's Party and Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League are pulling the administration from different sides, not to mention the complications added by former president Pervez Musharraf. Second, there is a clear divide between the Pashtun people living in the Northwest frontier and those in Punjab and Sindh. The Punjabis and Sindhis cannot relate to the Taliban-controlled Northwest. Third, there is a perennial conflict between the Pakistani people and government. Pakistan is therefore a global worry, but even more for India."

H1N1 FLU OUTBREAK (SWINE FLU)

2. "NOW SWINE FLU" editorial in April 29 centrist Marathi daily LOKMAT: "The news of the swine flu outbreak in Mexico has spread fear all over the globe. In these days

of economic recession, even superpowers like the U.S. do not want an additional worry. This scare is hitting the world economy at a bad time. It will heavily influence the timing of the end of this global recession. Most Asian markets have tumbled on the news... worries over the spread of swine flu are likely to affect airline and tourism-related stocks..."

¶3. "HUMAN BEINGS' HELPLESSNESS IN FIGHTING SWINE FLU," editorial in April 29 centrist Gujarati biweekly business daily VYAPAR. "There are times when nature settles scores with human beings. This time it is through the outbreak of a flu that started from Mexico and has now reached epidemic levels, leaving 80 people dead thus far. This is nature's way of reminding us humans not to exceed our limits and tamper with the laws of nature. What will our approach be on this? During episodes of mad cow disease and bird flu, humans killed thousands of animals and birds that spread such diseases. Although impractical, the logical question arises: will human beings now kill humans affected with this Swine flu [H1N1] to safeguard others? It is also pathetic that a human civilization that has conquered the moon and Mars doesn't have medication to fight this type of flu!"

¶4. "NEW HAZARD," editorial in April 29 independent Kolkata Bengali daily, ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA. "Surveillance of foreigners at points of entry, awareness campaigns, and speedy arrangements to tackle swine flu at different hospitals are the preliminary steps for controlling the

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virus. They must be taken immediately."

¶5. "SWINE FLU: PRECAUTIONS NEEDED," editorial in April 29, Bangalore-based left-of-center Kannada daily PRAJAVANI: "It is a great relief that the Union government has rightly stepped up surveillance measures at all airports and seaports to check the spread of swine flu. The union government should take all possible steps to put precautionary measures in place to monitor the situation."

SRI LANKA UNREST

¶6. "THE VEXED SRI LANKA KNOT," editorial in April 28 nationalist Hindi daily RASHTRIYA SAHARA: "If the Sri Lankan government declares a formal ceasefire, it will be a major success for India. At the same time, India does not deserve all credit since the U.N., European nations and the United States issued appeals to the Sri Lankan government to cease the violence. This present let-up in fighting is, therefore, just a tactical retreat dictated by an international furore over civilian killings. The Lanka government's decision came in response to tremendous international pressure to halt hostilities, and the LTTE announcement of a ceasefire. Colombo is totally consumed with catching LTTE supremo Prabhakaran. Although there may be a temporary truce, the Lanka government will not give up the fight at this crucial and decisive stage."

¶7. "RAJAPAKSE'S COMPASSION," editorial in the April 29 independent Kolkata Bengali daily, ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA. "President Rajapakse's assurance will not provide any ray of hope for the families of thousands of innocent Tamils. Prabhakaran's warriors are virtually trapped... they are counting their final moments... those who will survive in refugee camps at the mercy of the Sri Lankan forces also cannot expect to have any honorable equal citizenship."
BURLEIGH